

NORTHERN TRIBUNE.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1883.

A BLIND CAT.

How It Adapted Itself to Its Condition—Its Mysterious Homing Faculty.

The family favorite whose misfortunes have afforded an opportunity to observe the workings of instinct under difficulties is a noble specimen of the genus *Felis*. Dido is his name, given for simple euphony, without regard to gender. During the four years of his life he has never been known to do anything wrong unless it be to fight desperately against all feline intruders. In one of his many encounters Dido met with an injury to one of his feet that made a surgical operation necessary, from which he recovered, but shortly afterward went totally blind. A cataract was formed over each eye, by which, as repeated experiments proved, vision was thoroughly obscured. This calamity came on suddenly, and placed the cat in circumstances not provided for by the ordinary gifts of instinct. What to do with himself was a problem hard to solve. He would sit and mew most piteously as if bemoaning his condition; and when he attempted to move about he met with all the mishaps that the reader will be ready to imagine. He ran against walls, fell down stairs, stumbled over sticks, and when once on the top rail of the fence he would traverse its entire length seeking in vain for a safe jumping-off place. On being called, he would run about bewildered, as if not knowing whence the voice came nor whether he should go to find the one calling. In short Dido's life seemed hardly worth the living, and we were seriously plotting his death, when the cat himself clearly concluded that he must make his other senses atone for the loss of sight.

It was very curious to watch his experiments. One of the first of these was concerning the art of going down stairs. Instead of pawing the air, as he had been doing on reaching the top step, he went to one side till he felt the banisters touch his whiskers, and then guided thus he would descend safely and at full speed, turning into the hall on gaining the last step. One by one he made each familiar path a study, determined the exact location of each door, explored anew all his old haunts and seemed bravely resolved to begin life again. The result was so unexpectedly successful that we were deceived into the notion that sight had been restored. But by placing any obstacle in his path and then calling him eagerly to his accustomed feeding place it was evident that he was entirely blind, for he would run with full force against the box or other obstruction, and then for some time afterward, he would proceed with extreme caution.

Dido's "voice is still for war," and his blindness does not make him any less successful in his duels with intruders. He even goes abroad in quest of adventures, and comes safely home again. His value as a mouse does not seem in the least diminished. One of my experiments as to his capacity in this direction came near costing me dear. I had heard the gnawing of a rat in an old closet where they lay a quantity of newspapers. Here it was decided to leave Dido over night, and while arranging the papers for that purpose my hand was suddenly caught by the claws and teeth of what at the moment seemed like a small tiger. Poor Dido! He really looked ashamed of his blunder in mistaking my hand for his anticipated victim. Fortunately the papers served as a shield, or the injury inflicted might have been more serious. I may add that on opening the door next morning there was Dido mounting guard over a slain rat as big as ever spoiled good provisions or tried a housekeeper's temper.

It is well known that the house cat will find its way back from distant places to which it has been carried blindfolded, and how it performs such feats naturalists have never satisfactorily explained. The theory accepted by some of them is that the animal takes note of the successive odors encountered on the way, that these leave as distinct a series of images as those we should receive by the sense of sight, and that, by taking them in the inverse order from that in which they were received, he traces his homeward route. But, in the cat now described, the sense of smell is by no means acute, as has been proved by a variety of methods; and moreover being as one might say, perpetually blindfolded, he quite uniformly chose the shortest route home, without reference to the path he may have taken on leaving the house. Curious to see how far this homing instinct would extend, I took advantage of a fall of snow that wrapped under its blanket every familiar object, concealed all the paths, and deadened every odor and sound. Taking Dido to a considerable distance from the house, and making a number of turns to bewilder him, I tossed him upon a drift and quietly awaited results. The poor creature turned his sightless orbs this way and that, and mewed piteously for help. Finding, at length that he was thrown entirely upon his own resources, he stood motionless for about one minute and then, to my amazement, made his way directly through the untrodden snow to the house door, which, it is needless to add, was promptly opened to the shivering martyr to scientific investigation, to whom consolation was forthwith offered in a brimming bowl of new milk. My conclusion, therefore is that Wallace's ingenious theory of accounting for orientation by what he calls "brain registration" will not explain what has been described, but that the mysterious home methods of gaining knowledge as have been ordinarily observed, and is analogous to the migratory instinct controlling the long flights of some species of birds. —Scientific American.

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How to Save.
All hard workers are subject to bilious attacks which may end in serious illness. Parker's Ginger Tonic will keep the liver and kidneys active, and by preventing the attack save much sickness, loss of time and expense. Delay at such times means danger.—Detroit Press. See other column.

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Ladies' Handmade Caps, the latest styles, also the latest styles in Hoods, Mittens and Scarfs in all the latest shades. Ladies' Hand Made Shawls, the newest ever before shown to the people. Ladies' and Childrens Hosiery in endless variety, all handmade. Childrens saques of which we have a choice selection. Call and examine her goods and prices before purchasing elsewhere. Don't forget the place 3 doors north of the bank. MRS. D. LENEHAN.

Michigan Central Railroad Time

Table.

Mackinaw Division.

To take Effect Nov 12th, 1882.

TRAINS NORTH.				TRAINS SOUTH.			
Fr't	Ex't	Mail	Fr't	Mail	Ex't	Fr't	Mail
9:00	9:30	8:30	D. Bay City	4:55	6:30
9:00	9:30	8:30	W. Bay City	4:45	6:07
9:10	9:40	8:40	W. Bay City	4:30	5:55
9:30	10:00	9:10	Kalamazoo	4:30	5:55
9:40	10:10	9:10	State Road	4:30	5:55
11:15	11:45	10:30	Port Huron	4:30	5:55
11:35	12:05	10:50	St. Ignace	4:30	5:55
12:15	12:45	11:15	Deer River	4:30	5:55
12:25	12:55	11:25	Sterling	4:30	5:55
12:40	1:10	11:40	Dunham	4:30	5:55
1:15	1:45	12:15	W. Bay City	4:30	5:55
2:21	2:51	12:30	Summit	4:30	5:55
2:27	2:57	12:35	Greenwood	4:30	5:55
2:50	3:20	12:57	West Branch	4:30	5:55
3:30	4:00	1:37	West Branch	4:30	5:55
3:55	4:25	1:52	St. Ignace	4:30	5:55
4:25	4:55	2:12	Beaver Lake	4:30	5:55
4:50	5:20	2:37	St. Ignace	4:30	5:55
5:00	5:30	2:47	Kalamazoo	4:30	5:55
5:15	5:45	2:57	Cheney	4:30	5:55
5:30	6:00	3:12	Grayling	4:30	5:55
5:40	6:10	3:22	Port Huron	4:30	5:55
5:55	6:25	3:37	St. Ignace	4:30	5:55
6:10	6:40	3:52	Wolverine	4:30	5:55
6:25	6:55	4:07	Indian River	4:30	5:55
6:40	7:10	4:22	Indian River	4:30	5:55
6:55	7:25	4:37	Indian River	4:30	5:55
7:10	7:40	4:52	Indian River	4:30	5:55
7:25	7:55	5:07	Indian River	4:30	5:55
7:40	8:10	5:22	Indian River	4:30	5:55
7:55	8:25	5:37	Indian River	4:30	5:55
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